



This Is Our Playground: Recognizing the Value of Students as Innovators

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THIS IS OUR PLAYGROUND

RECOGNISING STUDENTS AS INNOVATORS

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THIS PROJECT RAN AS A ONE SEMESTER LINKED TEACHING PROJECT BETWEEN CONTENT DELIVERED ON THE INTERACTIVE MEDIA ARTS UNDERGRADUATE COURSE AND THE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND MUSEUM STUDIES MASTERS PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

CULMINATING IN A 12 HOUR HACK DAY EVENT AT THE ULSTER MUSEUM WHICH ASKED STUDENTS TO WORK IN COLLABORATIVE DESIGN GROUPS ACROSS THE 2 COURSES AND LEVELS TO DESIGN AND PROTOTYPE PROJECTS WHICH OFFERED PLAYFUL ENCOUNTERS IN THE MUSEUM

EMPLOYABILITY & INTERACTIVE MEDIA ARTS BA (HONS)

'What we need is a hybrid, a fusion of the critical stance of Cultural theory with the constructive attitude of the visual designer. This new media critic that we are imagining wants to make something, but what she wants to make will lead her viewers or readers to reevaluate their formal and cultural assumptions.'

Bolter, J. D. (2003)

The Interactive Media Arts program challenges students to think differently about the media. The course is constructed from half media theory and half theory informed practice to encourage students to challenge and innovate.

It is increasingly important for graduates from these programs, centred around creative response, to work with clients and in teams from other sectors to help develop their practice and use their approaches to help drive innovation and digital engagement in the cultural industries. This contextualisation of their creative practice gives a grounding and economic value to their creativity and approach.



EMPLOYABILITY & CULTURAL HERITAGE AND MUSEUM STUDIES MA

From community manager to digital producer, from web analyst to games developer new job titles are emerging at record speeds within the museum sector.

The challenge for academics is striking a balance between the academic integrity of traditional museum studies courses, whilst providing students with the skills required to fulfill these emerging job roles.

Emerging museum professionals now more than ever need to be able to think strategically, to apply theory to practice and act as custodians of the nation's collections. However they must also take risks, research and develop and test out new approaches to engaging visitors through emerging technologies and digital platforms. Museums, and their staff must understand and engage with digital culture if they are to remain important and relevant cultural institutions in this increasingly digital age.

A DIGITAL PRODUCER: IT IS INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT FOR STUDENTS TO CONSIDER THE EMERGING JOB ROLES IN THEIR SECTOR

"IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CULTURAL SECTOR, A DIGITAL PRODUCER IS A PERSON WHO CAN SIMULTANEOUSLY HOLD THE ARTISTIC, TECHNICAL AND BUSINESS STRANDS OF A PROJECT. THE ROLE IS MORE THAN JUST TRANSACTIONAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT: A DIGITAL PRODUCER HAS THE TRANSLATIONAL LEADERSHIP ABILITIES TO BE ABLE TO TALK TO AND INSPIRE NOT ONLY A PROJECT TEAM BUT ALSO AN ARTS BOARD AND A JOURNALIST."

<http://www.welcometosync.com/the-producer-gap/>

DIFFERENT FORMS OF "EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS"

Produce for context
Disruptive Thinking
Work across sectors in groups with varied backgrounds
Working on proof of concept/principle
Developing iteratively in fast design cycles
Interdisciplinary Research
A consideration of the importance of Arts based R&D
Working under a tight deadline

First presented at the MW2013 conference in Portland, Oregon

The experiences that students developed are designed to question the notion of play in the museum, recontextualising the collections and gallery spaces to create new modes for the public to investigate and interrogate the spaces of the museum as an institution developing new dialogues with the exhibits.

These 'experiences' act as a tangible example of how time constrained prototyping can facilitate innovative responses to museum collections and presents a case for museums to develop and implement interactive experiences in a faster and more efficient manner.

METHOD/EVENT

